(a) whether it is a fact that Railways has cancelled a panel of 570 candidates, who were empanelled by General Manager, Southern Railway;

(b) whether it is also a fact that the empanelled candidates were trained apprentices of Railways; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) to (c) Southern Railway issued notification on 1.7.2009 calling for applications from amongst Course Completed Act Apprentices, for their engagement as substitutes in Group 'D' posts. Southern Railway has published the result on 10.11.09 and 530 candidates have been advised to join as substitutes in Group 'D'.

Hijack of Delhi-Bhubneshwar Rajdhani train

3362. DR. N. JANARDHANA REDDY: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether in view of train hijacking of Delhi-Bhubaneshwar Rajdhani train, her Ministry's security directorate has underlined the need for further strengthening its coordination mechanism with States to avert such incidents;

(b) if so, whether Railways has discussed the matter with the State Governments on providing security measures for protection of passengers particularly in the sensitive areas; and

(c) if so, the outcome of discussion held and further steps Government proposes to take to ensure passengers' safety?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) to (c) Since maintenance of Law and Order is the sole responsibility of State Police, Railway has to depend upon them to prevent such incidents of train hijacking etc. Railway Protection Force (RPF) maintains close co-ordination with the State Police and the Government Railway Police (GRP).

A meeting in this connection was held between Senior officials of West Bengal Government and senior Railway officials on 29.10.2009. State authorities were requested to take all necessary steps for providing security to railway passengers in vulnerable and sensitive areas. It has been further requested for deployment of additional forces for area domination on either side of railway track, bridges & tunnels, Railway stations to tackle such incidents. In other States, periodical co-ordination meetings are also held by the Railways from time to time and State Police authorities are emphasized to take necessary action. Railway is providing all necessary assistance to the State Governments to provide security to Railways Union Ministry of Home Affairs has also held a meeting recently at New Delhi to discuss the measures to be taken to prevent militant attacks which was attended by Senior officials of Railway Board & RPF.